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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
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FEEDING THE FARM COW IN THE SOUTH.

Prepared in the Dairy Division of the Bureau of Animal Industry.

FEED THE COW LIBERALLY.

In the cotton-growing sections of the South, where comparatively few cattle have been kept and where they have not been regarded as a source of profit, the idea has become prevalent that profitable cattle are those that consume little feed. It should be remembered, however, that the feed they consume is used for two main purposes, (1) to support the body and (2) to produce milk. Each one of these things requires a certain amount of feed. If just enough feed is given to support the body, there is nothing left for the production of milk. Cow feeds generally are worth much more in the form of milk, cream, and butter than in the form of feed, and the cow that can convert the most feed into the most of these products is the most profitable.

The cow is an animal that requires a large amount of feed, especially roughage; therefore quantity is one of the first and most important principles of feeding.

PASTURE AND ROUGHAGE.

Cows do best and produce the largest quantity of milk in early summer, when grass is abundant. Grass is the best feed known, and when possible cows should have plenty of it. If pasture is limited, forage crops, such as corn, sorghum, millet, and the like, should be planted to supplement the pasture and assure plenty of green feed during the growing season.

Green, juicy feed, besides producing large quantities of milk, keep the cow's digestive system in good condition; consequently, some such feed in winter is desirable. Patches of rye or oats near the barn furnish grazing at times, but can not be depended upon to furnish all the cow needs every day from the appearance of frost until spring opens.

NOTE.—Intended for farmers in the cotton belt who desire to diversify their farming because of the economic crisis which adversely affects the cotton crop at this time.

A constant and dependable supply of juicy feed for cows can be obtained in turnips, rutabagas, or carrots. These roots can be fed to cows without injuring the taste of the milk, provided they are fed immediately after milking.

Since cows require it, and roughage is the cheapest feed and one that every farmer can produce on the farm, cows should be given all of this material that they will eat without waste. Such hays as pea-vine, vetch, soy bean, and other legumes are the best dry roughage for feeding, but the grass hays, shucks, and coarse hays of the farm are also good. The coarser hays are eaten more readily if mixed with the better hay.

If a man has 10 cows or more the cheapest form in which juicy feed can be furnished for winter feeding is silage. Silage spoils on exposure to the air, and with less than that number of cows it can not be fed off rapidly enough to keep the top layer in good condition.

GRAIN FEEDS.

With plenty of roughage and rutabagas or turnips the cow will keep in good condition throughout the winter and produce a fair flow of milk, but she can not consume enough of these bulky feeds to furnish all the food elements necessary to produce the largest amount of milk, consequently some very rich feeds which are not bulky must be added. Such feeds are bran, cottonseed meal, shorts, and corn meal. Just what grain or meal is best to give a cow depends upon the kind of roughage she gets. Pea-vine, vetch, clover, soy-bean, and velvet-bean hay are among the best roughages. Therefore if the cow gets plenty of such hay she will not need much cottonseed meal and bran. When the cow has all the pea-vine, soy-bean, clover, or vetch hay and turnips or rutabagas that she will eat, a good mixture of grain and meal to give her is:

One part by weight of wheat bran;

One part by weight of cottonseed meal.

Grass hay, shucks, straw, and the like contain comparatively little of the elements found in cottonseed meal, bran, and such feeds, and when these roughages are fed, more cottonseed meal will have to be used to furnish the elements the cow must have to produce the largest amount of milk. If grass hay, shucks, straw, and rutabagas or turnips form the roughages, a good mixture of grain and meal to feed is:

One part by weight of wheat bran;

Two parts by weight of cottonseed meal.

The grain mixture is the most expensive part of the feed, and should be given to the cow in proportion to the milk she gives. About 1 pound of either of the mixtures mentioned should be fed

for each 3 pounds of milk produced. For instance, if the cow gives 12 pounds of milk, she should receive 4 pounds of the mixture. More of the mixture can be added if it will make the cow give enough more milk to pay for the extra feed.

Cottonseed meal is one of the best milk-producing feeds, but it is very rich and if fed in too large quantities may injure the cow. To avoid this it is well to mix bran or some light, bulky feed with it. If cottonseed meal is the only meal or grain fed, and the roughage contains no green feed of any kind, about 4 pounds of cottonseed meal a day can be fed without injury. By feeding turnips or any other green feed the meal may be increased to about 6 pounds a day.

Corn meal is an excellent feed to mix with cottonseed meal, but usually it is too expensive to feed profitably. If corn sells for more than 60 cents a bushel it probably will not pay to use it as cow feed.

PLENTY OF FEED IS BETTER THAN STOCK POWDERS.

The use of stock powders and patent stock feeds is a very expensive and wasteful practice. When a cow is well she needs no medicine or stimulants, and when she is sick she needs to be treated for the particular ailment she has. The lean, rough-haired, hollow-eyed condition of many cows is not always due to sickness, but generally to lack of feed or to effects of ticks. If a cow receives plenty of pea vine, soy bean, vetch, or clover and the other feeds mentioned in this circular, she will need no condition powders of any kind. When free from ticks and plenty of feed is given and she is not in good condition, then she requires special treatment by some one who knows how to treat such cases.

GOOD CARE IS IMPORTANT.

In addition to good feed, the cow must have good care in order to make the greatest profit. Exposure to cold winds and rains greatly counteracts the effects of good feeding. Stalls in which the cows are kept should be free from large cracks that admit cold wind in drafts. Ventilation is needed, but the air should be admitted through windows or openings high enough from the ground to prevent the wind from blowing on the cows. The stall must not become wet and miry with manure or from the rain. It should be kept dry and well bedded with leaves, straw, sawdust, or other available material. This will not only keep the cow clean and make her comfortable, but will afford a pleasant place to milk in. The bedding will also add to the amount of manure that can be carried to the fields.

The cow is a nervous animal and should be treated gently and kindly. If she steps on the milker's foot, or slashes his face with her

tail, or kicks when her teats are pinched, she should not be kicked in return; and if the feed-room door is left open and she goes in, she should not be beaten for it. A careful milker rarely suffers injury by the cow, and she will respond readily to care, patience, and kindness on the part of the milker. Rough treatment is expensive, for it reduces the milk flow.

For further information on the feeding of cows write to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., for Farmers' Bulletin 22, The Feeding of Farm Animals.